
April 2003 - Injury Prevention Newsletter

Alaska News and Resources

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2. Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan for Public Comment March 2003-June 2003
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1. **May is "Nobody Gets Hurt Month":** Governor Frank H. Murkowski has proclaimed May as "Nobody Gets Hurt Month" and is encouraging all citizens to support and participate in activities that elevate awareness of the importance of safety and reduce injuries in the workplace and in the community. Vicki Swanson of the Denali Safety Council stated that for 16 consecutive years (1980-1995) Alaska had the highest death rate from unintentional injuries of any US state. In 1996 we dropped to 4th. In 1997 we dropped to 13th. In 1998 we dropped to 21st. That is the good news. Now for the bad news: In 1999 (latest available) Alaska rose to 12th with one reason being an increase in motor vehicle deaths. The Denali Safety Council will be focusing on Safe Driving during the month of May. Shell Oil has a series of nine booklets on safe driving which cover such topics as: driving dangers, kids in the car, foul weather driving, and deadly distractions. You can obtain these booklets by visiting: www.countonshell.com click on Products and Services and choose Shell Driving Booklets. For a copy of the Denali Safety Council's 2002 Annual Report or other programs they provide you can go to: www.denalisafetycouncil.org
2. **Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan:** The Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan drafted by the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is available for public comment through June 2003. The plan outlines the incidence of suicide in Alaska and outlines goals and strategies for prevention. There are 6 themes addressed throughout the plan:
 1. Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility
 2. Successful suicide prevention requires local plans and actions, supported by and integrated with regional, state, and national resources
 3. Suicide is related to many other problems facing Alaska's communities and cannot be addressed alone
 4. Suicide prevention efforts should target at-risk populations
 5. To prevent suicide, we need to develop health communities across Alaska
 6. Successful suicide prevention will require sufficient resources.For more information or for a copy of the plan you can go to the Council's

website: www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention

3. **Crashes involving Pedestrians NHTSA and Alaska:** The National Highway Safety Transportation Administration (NHTSA) recently released a research report on crashes involving pedestrians in the U.S. The report focuses on pedestrian fatalities 1998-2001. Here are some of the report's key findings:

- 18% involve hit-and-run crashes
- 78% occur at non-intersections
- 44% occur on roadways without crosswalks
- 46% of all pedestrian fatalities occur between 6pm and midnight

More than a fifth of all children ages 5 to 9 killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians. The age group with the highest rate of pedestrian fatalities are those 70 and over. "Clearly, some of the most vulnerable members of our society - the young and the elderly - are often the victims of serious pedestrian crashes, said NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D. Dr. Runge also stated that alcohol played a significant role in deadly pedestrian crashes. "Alcohol involvement among pedestrians in such crashes is 37%; for drivers, it is 18%." said Runge. New Mexico had the highest fatality rate at 3.94 with North Dakota the lowest at 0.47

In Alaska an analysis of pedestrian injuries 1996-1999 through the Trauma Register shows there were 336 pedestrian injuries with 33.3% of pedestrians having alcohol involvement. 40.5% of the injuries occurred in Anchorage with Fairbanks a distant second at 5.7%, Ketchikan was third with 3.3%, and Barrow, Homer, Bethel, and Palmer were all fourth at 2.1%. Alaska's pedestrian injury rates/100,000 are as follows (by age):

0-4	20.7
5-9	9.3
10-14	15.1
15-19	13.4
20-29	11.8
30-39	13.3
40-49	13.2
50-59	14.1
60-69	18.2
70+	8.7

For more information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

4. **NHTSA Traffic Safety Digest:** The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration has released their Traffic Safety Digest: A Compendium of Innovative State and Community Traffic Safety Projects, Winter 2003. This edition focuses on traffic safety projects in the areas of Alcohol and Other Drugs, Child Passenger Safety, Occupant Protection, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Police Traffic Services, School Bus Safety, and Youth Programs. Since 1993 the Traffic Safety Digest has been published for the purpose of highlighting outstanding and innovative traffic safety and injury prevention projects that occur throughout the country. Each project outlined in the digest shows the program's goals and objectives, targeted population, strategies and activities, and results.

For a copy of this digest or any past issues from Fall 1996 to present go to: www.nhtsa.dov.gov Once on the homepage, go to **People** and then to **Communications and Outreach**. You'll see **Traffic Safety Digest** under Communications and Outreach. You can also subscribe to the digest through the NHTSA website.

5. **Partners for Child Passenger Safety:** In it's fifth year of data collection, the Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) research team has released its Interim Report 2003. It contains the recent trends in child occupant protection, as well as in-depth analyses on injury mechanisms to children in motor vehicle crashes - all of which are drawn from the PCPS national surveillance system. PCPS compiles and analyzes data on real world crashes involving children by combining State Farm claims information with detailed telephone interviews and on-site crash investigations on more than 200,000 crashes involving more than 300,00 children. It has become the largest source of real world data on children in motor vehicle crashes. The report lists trends, research findings, and interventions. According to the research PCPS has seen a marked increase in child restraint use for every year of age among 3-to-8 year-olds. There has also been a significant decrease in front row seating among 4-to-8-year-olds. One recommendation PCPS gives in the report is "Buckle Up" is no longer an adequate message - age appropriate restraint **MUST** be used in order to reduce the incidence of abdominal injuries. For more information on the report visit the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia at: www.chop.edu

6. **CPSC says deadly products are still in use despite warnings and recalls:** Despite recall notices and warnings, consumers continue to use products that have the potential to seriously injure or kill according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). They have released a list of common hazardous consumer products and are urging consumers to use the list to check their home and remove or fix unsafe products. Some of the hazardous products that consumers are likely to find in their home are:

- Old power tools that present an electrocution hazard especially if they were made before 1980.
- Old extension cords that present a fire or shock hazard as they may have undersized wires and can be overloaded easily.
- Window blind cords with loops that can strangle children. Window blinds may have pull cords that end in a loop or inner cords that can form a loop if pulled by children. Both can cause strangulation.
- Halogen torchiere floor lamps that can cause fire when combustibles such as drapes are too close to the bulb.
- Old cribs with more than 2-3/8 inches between crib slates; corner posts; or cut-outs on the headboard or footboard present a suffocation and strangulation hazard
- Hairdryers without immersion protection devices to prevent electrocution.
- Drawstrings around the neck on children's jackets and sweatshirts can catch and strangle children.

For a copy of the entire list you can go to the agency's website:
www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.asp

- 7. National SAFE KIDS Week unveils new research:** New research unveiled May 1 (thus the delay of this April newsletter) by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and Johnson & Johnson shows that from 1987-2000, the unintentional injury death rate for children 14 and under has dropped by nearly 40 %. This year is the 15th anniversary of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and to mark this milestone SAFE KIDS and its founding sponsor Johnson & Johnson undertook a comprehensive study on child safety in America: A Report to the Nation: Trends in Unintentional Childhood Injury Mortality, 1987-2000. The study unveiled many findings. The most startling trends were seen in motor vehicle occupant injuries, airway obstruction, and drowning. Specifically:
- From 1987-2000 the motor vehicle occupant death rate among children ages 14 and under declined just 16%.
 - The death rate among children ages 5-9 declined even less, just 1%. Motor vehicle occupant injury remains the leading cause of injury-related death among children.
 - While the airway obstruction death rate decreased 24% for children 14 and under, there has been no progress for airway obstruction injury among infants under age 1.
 - The unintentional childhood drowning death rate declined 32% from 1987-2000. Despite this decline, drowning remains the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 14 and under.

The theme of National SAFE KIDS week is WRAP YOUR ARMS AROUND SAFETY and coalitions and chapters throughout the U.S. (including Alaska) are holding events to teach families how to prevent injuries and save lives. For more information on events, to find a coalition close to you, or for a copy of the report visit: www.safekids.org

- 8. Product recalls and safety information:** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission tracks injuries or deaths in over 15,000 consumer products. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at 800 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at 800-638-8270. Other information and product recalls are available on their website: www.cpsc.gov.

This message has been compiled by the Section of Community Health and EMS (CHEMS), Alaska Division of Public Health and sent to subscribers of the AK-Prev and AHELP list-serves. It has also been sent as a "bcc" to others in Alaska including Public Health Centers, SAFE KIDS coalitions, Native Health Organizations, and regional EMS Councils and Coordinators who may be interested and active in injury prevention and health promotion. The purpose is to share resources, breaking news, training opportunities, product recalls, and opinions to help prevent injuries to Alaskans. Feedback and contributions are encouraged. Contributions can be directed to Karen Lawfer:
karen_lawfer@health.state.ak.us

Link for the AK-Prev and AK-EMSC list serve: http://chems.alaska.gov/ems_list_servers.htm

Link for AHELP list serve: <http://www.auroraweb.com/ahec>